



July 14, 2006

## Two are sentenced in \$600,000 check scheme

A federal judge has sentenced two Providence men – **Anthony Dimeo** and **Charles Lambert** – to federal prison for engaging in a \$600,000 check fraud scheme against Citizens Bank. The two recruited college aged individuals to open bank accounts at Citizens and then had them deposit worthless checks and rapidly withdraw up to three times the value of the checks before Citizens could catch on.

United States Attorney Robert Clark Corrente announced the sentences, which U.S. District Court Judge William E. Smith imposed in U.S. District Court, Providence. Judge Smith sentenced Dimeo to 41 months in prison and Lambert to 18 months in prison, followed by 12 months home confinement.

Both men pled guilty in April to federal bank fraud charges. At the plea hearings, Assistant U.S. Attorney Lee H. Vilker said that the government could prove that Lambert and Dimeo, along with codefendant **Joseph D’Anna**, engaged in a nine month long check fraud conspiracy that netted about \$608,068 for them and their coconspirators.

The three men recruited college aged individuals to deposit worthless checks in accounts at Citizens. On the morning after the deposit, one of the conspirators would escort the account holder to three different Citizens branches to negotiate checks for cash. In this manner, the conspirators were able to obtain up to three times the purported value of the deposited check before Citizens could determine that the deposit was worthless.

After the withdrawals were made, the individual whose account was used was typically paid \$1,500, Lambert and D'Anna each kept \$1,500, and Dimeo kept the remainder of the withdrawals, typically between \$9,000 and \$10,000.

The scheme was perpetrated 53 times between March and November 2005.

D'Anna has also pled guilty to bank fraud and is awaiting sentencing.

The United States Secret Service, the Rhode Island State Police, Providence Police, and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service investigated the check scheme. Assistant U.S. Attorney Vilker is prosecuting the federal case.

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